United Nations E/CN.3/2005/20

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
21 December 2004

Original: English

Statistical Commission
Thirty-sixth session
1-4 March 2005
Item 7 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Activities not classified by field: indicators for follow-up to the United Nations conferences

Indicators for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals and for follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared at the request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-fifth session.[a] It describes the work of the Inter-Agency Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators in 2004-2005 in compiling and analysing the indicators, reviewing methodologies related to the agreed indicators, coordinating data compilation at the global level and coordinating support to countries which are establishing country-led programmes of data collection, analysis and reporting for Millennium Development Goals indicators. It also describes the 2004-2005 international work plan for Millennium Development Goals indicators leading up to the high-level plenary of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly to be held in September 2005, and the interrelation between international and national work on Millennium Development Goals indicators. The report is presented to the Commission for information.

[a] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2004, Supplement No. 4* (E/2004/24), chap I.A.

* E/CN.3/2005/1.

04-66046 (E) 250105

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1–4	3
II.	Inter-agency work on monitoring progress	5–14	4
	A. Global monitoring	5–9	4
	B. The Millennium Development Goals as national goals: country-level monitoring	10–14	5
III.	Producing statistics to monitor the Millennium Development Goals	15–34	6
	A. Improving statistical methods underlying the Millennium Development Goals indicators	17–22	6
	B. Data requirement and statistical capacity-building	23–28	7
	1. National strategies for the development of statistics	29–30	8
	2. International Household Survey Network	31	9
	3. United Nations Development Programme activities in the area of statistical capacity-building	32–33	9
	4. Other activities	34	10
Annex			
	Improving the quality of data for the Millennium Development Goals indicators		11

I. Introduction

1. In 2001, as a follow-up activity to the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and to the request of the Secretary-General to regularly provide statistics and analysis to monitor progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations Statistics Division established the Inter-Agency Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators. The Expert Group is responsible for compiling statistics and analysis of trends for annual global reporting on the Millennium Development Goals, and defining methods and technical specifications for Millennium Development Goals indicators. In the course of its work and in consultation with country and donor participants, it has also identified key areas and strategies to strengthen statistical capacity in countries for the production of development statistics relevant to the Goals. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and its Statistics Division lead the work of the Expert Group and are responsible for pulling together the statistics and analysis on the Goals to be used as a basis for the Secretary-General's annual report to the General Assembly on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration (see A/57/270; A/58/323; and A/59/282 and Corr.1).

2. Monitoring is based on international data series compiled by specialized agencies responsible for the different areas covered by the Goals. To ensure full consultation and collaboration across the United Nations system, the other relevant international agencies and national statistical services, the Expert Group includes representatives from specialized agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the regional commissions, national statistical offices, bilateral and multilateral donors and ad hoc experts on selected topics. The Expert Group meets at least once a year to review methods, standards and available data for the agreed indicators, and reviews and analyses trends for each of the quantifiable goals and targets.

3. Other major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields have adopted sets of indicators for monitoring progress in the key areas identified in their outcome plans of actions and agendas and to inform the necessary policies. After the Millennium Development Goals indicator set was established, the Statistical Commission requested that a review of the conference indicators, as identified by the Friends of the Chair in relation to the Millennium Development Goals indicators, be carried out by an advisory committee on indicators. The committee, which was composed of national statistical experts from 13 member States, reviewed the correspondence between the main indicators as defined in the report of the Friends of the Chair on an assessment of the statistical indicators derived from United Nations summit meetings (E/CN.3/2002/26), and the Millennium Development Goals indicators (see E/CN.3/2004/33). At its thirty-fifth session, the Statistical Commission adopted the Committee's conclusions.

4. The present report will describe the work of the Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals indicators in 2004 and review plans for the preparation of Millennium Development Goals indicators and monitoring outputs to be issued in 2005, in connection with the series of events planned for the lead-up to the high-level plenary of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly to be held in September 2005.

II. Inter-agency work on monitoring progress

A. Global monitoring

5. The Expert Group met twice in 2004. At its first 2004 meeting, held in New York from 27 March to 1 April 2004, it reviewed the data series and analyses of trends compiled by agencies on progress towards the goals and targets for the preparation of the 2004 report; agreed on plans and timetable for preparing the Millennium Development Goals indicators and analyses for 2005 reporting; considered international work needed to further develop appropriate statistical methods and indicators to measure achievement of the goals and targets; and considered needed regional and country technical cooperation programmes to support statistical capacity-building in countries for Millennium Development Goals monitoring and programming.

6. Based on the inputs provided by the agencies, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and its Statistics Division prepared a report entitled "Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals 1990-2004" (see http://millenniumindicators.un.org) and a statistical compilation and analysis of trends to inform the 2004 report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration (A/59/282 and Corr.1).

7. The Millennium Indicators Database maintained by the United Nations Statistics Division (http://millenniumindicators.un.org) was also regularly updated during 2004, with country data series provided by the responsible agencies on the agreed Millennium Development Goals indicators and on additional series provided as supplementary information for more in-depth analysis. Currently, the database contains the most recent data series as produced and provided by the partner agencies and consistent with the regional and global estimates which will be presented in the 2005 round of Millennium Development Goals global reporting.

8. At its second 2004 meeting, held in Geneva from 27 September to 1 October 2004, the Expert Group reviewed plans for reporting in 2005, prior to the high-level plenary to be held in September 2005, and assessed the availability of data for the 2005 round of reporting. The Expert Group also reviewed proposals and drafted a work plan for the production of a publication on progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals 1990-2005, for worldwide distribution to the general public, media, opinion leaders and policy makers in 2005; discussed ways to improve methods and data-collection programmes for Millennium Development Goals indicators; reviewed trends and examples of country reports on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals; and discussed plans and a timeline for the release of other Millennium Development Goals-related outputs in 2005, including a Statistics Division Internet publication on Millennium Development Goals trends, the Millennium Indicators Database and other data sets produced by different agencies, with a focus on ensuring consistency and full adherence of data sets with the analysis presented in the main Millennium Development Goals reports and global sectoral reports. Eighty-three specialists attended the meeting from international agencies, the five regional commissions, national statistical offices and donor agencies. The Asian Development Bank and the European Union were also represented for the first time.

9. The Expert Group agreed on the outputs expected for 2005 to be issued in connection with the high-level plenary to be held in September 2005, as follows:

(a) A full set of data and analysis on Millennium Development Goals indicators to be submitted by the Statistics Division to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General as input for the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General to the sixtieth session of the General Assembly in 2005;

(b) A report for wide distribution on Millennium Development Goals trends 1990-2005, to be issued after the report of the Secretary-General to inform the political international debate on the Millennium Development Goals before the Millennium Summit to be held in September;

(c) The annual Internet publication prepared by the Statistics Division at its web site (http://millenniumindicators.un.org), containing detailed data and analysis on Millennium Development Goals and background indicators.

B. The Millennium Development Goals as national goals: country-level monitoring

10. An essential component of the Millennium Development Goals monitoring is the preparation of data and analysis of related trends at the national level in country Millennium Development Goals reports. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the lead agency in this work and has been assisting Governments and Millennium Development Goals country teams in the preparation and dissemination of their reports, through training and financial support.

11. The country reports are primarily oriented to national advocacy and public dialogue on the Goals. Millennium Development Goals national reports have now been produced in 94 countries and widely used to inform national debate and promote the production and use of statistics for policy-making and monitoring. Six countries have produced their second reports (Albania, Armenia, Bolivia, Cambodia, Lithuania and Senegal) and two, Cameroon and Viet Nam, have released their third consecutive annual report. The quality of Millennium Development Goals reports is increasing, both in terms of process and product, as countries acquire more experience. In particular, the reports are increasingly presenting data disaggregated across geographic regions and by sex. A review of all Millennium Development Goals reports to assess the inclusion of a gender dimension will be presented in 2005. All the country reports are available on the UNDP web site (http://www.undp.org/mdg/countryreports.html).

12. Two Millennium Development Goals regional reports, for the Arab States and Central Europe, were released in 2004, bringing the total number of regional reports to five. Subregional reports were also produced for the Caribbean and the South Pacific.

13. The Millennium Development Goals country reports are instrumental in raising awareness and helping focus national debate on development issues, and influence the national political process by drawing attention to priority-setting concerns and encouraging public dialogue. In Albania, for example, a Millennium Development Goals resolution was adopted by the Parliament. In Nepal, the Government has linked the poverty reduction strategy and the Millennium Development Goals in a comprehensive business plan. Political leaders have

become more involved in the launch of these reports, demonstrating their reinforced commitment. Country ownership is also more evident as more countries are tailoring their targets to fit national development plans and priorities.

14. Reporting by donor countries on goal 8 concerning global development partnership targets has also progressed. Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway have launched Millennium Development Goals reports. Denmark has also recently completed its second report, and it was expected that Canada's first report would be completed before the end of 2004. The Norwegian report, besides goal 8, also covers progress on adapting its broader policies to help adjust the international framework conditions to the fight against poverty, and is urging other donor countries to report on the same area. The European Commission will also prepare a report in 2005. Finally, several developing nations have begun reporting on goal 8 from the recipient perspective in their reports, including Benin, Czech Republic, Guyana, Lebanon, Paraguay and Viet Nam.

III. Producing statistics to monitor the Millennium Development Goals

15. The Millennium Development Goals have succeeded in raising awareness that a sound quantitative knowledge of progress and shortfalls is an important element in reaching the final goals set by the Millennium Declaration.

16. The monitoring requirements have also clearly uncovered important shortcomings in the availability of data to monitor development efforts and limitations in the technical specifications and methods for the compilation of the Millennium Development Goals indicators. Producing the necessary data to monitor the Goals in countries where resources are limited is obviously a significant challenge. Aggregating the data to meaningful regional and global levels is another complex task. Finally, the documentation on sources and methods for some of the indicators — especially in policy areas that have only recently become the focus of monitoring — are still not fully developed.

A. Improving statistical methods underlying the Millennium Development Goals indicators

17. Over the past few years, the Expert Group has worked to promote improvement and better documentation on the standards and methods used in compiling and analysing Millennium Development Goals indicators, including finding ways to aggregate country data in a meaningful way, overcoming problems of comparability and, even more importantly, providing a meaningful analysis of the aggregate figures that represents the local situation. This work is undertaken through the Expert Group, through thematic subgroups established by it and through other inter-agency mechanisms bringing together specialized agencies in the various fields covered by the Goals.

18. The Expert Group's thematic subgroups were established in early 2004, after it had agreed at its meeting, in November 2003, that some areas needed urgent attention. The subgroups review methodologies and technical specifications related to Millennium Development Goals indicators, review data and data sources

normally available in countries in relation to the compilation of indicators at the country level and for inclusion in international data series, and suggest guidelines and capacity-building priorities to countries. The subgroups' outputs and suggestions are considered by the Expert Group, with the Statistics Division providing coordination. At its meeting in November 2003, the Expert Group established subgroups on gender indicators; poverty and hunger; environment; slums; and employment.

19. The subgroups held several meetings during 2004 and reported the outcome of their work to the Expert Group meeting held in September 2004. They presented their recommendations for follow-up and refinement to some of the indicators that have proved more problematic. Their recommendations will be further discussed following the 2005 summit. All subgroups have country representatives from national statistical services.

20. The Expert Group has closely monitored the work of the United Nations Millennium Project task forces. In most cases, some members of the task forces also participate in the subgroups, and vice versa.

21. An important part of the work of the subgroups is devoted to reconciling and finding ways to integrate data from different sources — as in the case of education enrolment and attainment — and to identify indicators that are more suitable for analysis at the national and subnational levels and can be presented at the disaggregated level for different population groups to be used in country reporting — as in the case of the gender indicator list identified for national reporting.

22. A detailed description of areas of work and recent development is contained in the annex.

B. Data requirement and statistical capacity-building

23. For several Millennium Development Goals indicators, data remain scarce, which for others most of the data available in international sources are estimated by the international agencies responsible for the data compilation. Although the use of international sources and global and regional estimates is justified by monitoring requirements and the political urgency of showing trends and shortfalls for advocacy purposes, the improvement of data production at the national level remains the first priority for the statistical community.

24. The availability of reliable statistics and the capacity of Governments to systematically measure and monitor development indicators is an indispensable factor for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in countries. However, many countries lack the statistical capabilities to regularly produce reliable data to address national policy priorities and inform and monitor necessary policies. Many countries do not have a sustainable, coherent programme of household surveys or administrative data systems which can be used to produce basic statistics routinely.[1] Where basic statistical systems are not available, global monitoring may have to rely on national and international estimates of varying quality and reliability. This may lead to misjudgments regarding progress and undermine the effectiveness of policy planning and the implementation of interventions at the national and subnational levels.

25. Recognizing that quantitative monitoring of progress is easier for some targets than for others and that high-quality data for some of the indicators are available for many countries, the Expert Group has discussed the need to assist countries in building national capacity.

26. The work on Millennium Development Goals indicators has clearly identified the need to mobilize substantial new national and international commitments to provide adequate and well coordinated resources to have a lasting impact on the development of national statistical services. Over the past three years, as commitments to the Goals have taken shape, Governments, agencies and donors have identified the statistical programme requirements for effective and sustained monitoring and have committed themselves to addressing these needs in a concerted fashion.

27. A major step in turning these commitments into action for statistical development was the endorsement of the Marrakech action plan for statistics: better data for better results, an action plan for improving development statistics, by the Second International Round Table on Managing for Development Results, held in Marrakech on 4 and 5 February 2004.[2] The action plan for makes a number of specific recommendations aimed at donors and the international statistical community to support the development of national statistical programmes and to ensure funding and technical support for statistical capacity-building. The Statistical Commission added its endorsement at its thirty-fifth session, in March 2004.[3]

28. The action plan calls for increasing resources to build statistical capacities in countries. The incremental funding needed to fully support the action plan is estimated at $118 million a year for building national statistical capacities such as population and housing censuses. The World Bank trust fund for statistical capacity-building has been replenished and renewed funding for the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty-first Century (PARIS 21) secretariat has been agreed. In March 2004, the World Bank approved a lending programme, to make it easier for countries to access loans and credits for implementing their statistical development plans. Ukraine and Burkina Faso are the first two countries to take advantage of this facility and others are planning to do so.

1. National strategies for the development of statistics

29. In the action plan, national policy makers and the international development community have agreed to give new urgency to strengthening statistical capacity to support the design, monitoring and evaluation of national development programmes, including poverty reduction strategies, sector strategies and the Millennium Development Goals, through mainstreaming strategic planning of statistical systems and preparing national statistical development strategies for all low-income countries by 2006. A national strategy for statistics provides a road map for strengthening statistical capacity across the entire national statistical system that builds on existing frameworks and improvement programmes and is mainstreamed into national policy processes, and provides a framework for mobilizing and harnessing national and international resources.

30. PARIS 21 regional activities comprise advocacy for the national strategy approach; a baseline assessment against which progress can be measured; regional workshops to support the design of national strategies; facilitation of financial and technical support for national strategy design; and reporting on progress. This work

is done in cooperation with regional organizations and development partners. Programme activities have been organized for Central America, the Andean Community, the Arab States, francophone African countries, the South African Development Community and East, South and Central Asia countries. To support these programmes, PARIS 21 has prepared documentation and guidelines (for current versions, see http://www.paris21.org).

2. International Household Survey Network

31. One of the action points of the action plan is the establishment of the International Household Survey Network, which held its first meeting in Washington, D.C., in June 2004. Its second meeting was held in Geneva on 27 September 2004, co-hosted by the World Health Organization and the World Bank. Its goals are to improve the availability, accessibility and quality of survey data and avoid duplication, reduce costs and alleviate the burden on national statistical systems. The Network recognized the need for international organizations engaged in household surveys to better coordinate their activities, and emphasized the importance of collaboration with country partners to ensure that national statistical needs are met. It agreed to work towards these goals through a programme of survey coordination, harmonization, and improved tools for archiving and dissemination of survey data and metadata. While focusing at first on achieving immediate results at the international level by increasing access to existing data sets and cooperation in the design and deployment of international surveys, the Network stressed the importance of promoting the demand for and use of sound statistics and of enhancing national capacity for survey programmes.

3. United Nations Development Programme activities in the area of statistical capacity-building

32. The focus of the poverty group of UNDP on the use of data for public and policy advocacy to build a stronger sense of national ownership complements other capacity-building activities that focus more on the production and supply of data.

33. The United Nations Development Group has developed a project to enhance the capacity of national statistical offices to maintain a central repository of data for Millennium Development Goals reporting and monitoring the impact of national development strategies. The project also provides training for users to make better use of Millennium Development Goals data and indicators and improve evidence-based management of development policy at the country level. With improved access to data and basic statistical training, the project will allow public advocates to monitor progress and tailor numerical targets to fit country-specific priorities, and to address intermediate and disaggregated targets. This project builds on the work of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to develop the Millennium Development Goals monitoring software Devinfo. The project promotes the use of Devinfo as a central repository of data. Training materials were to be finalized by the end of 2004 and translated by the end of January 2005. There will be a handover to regional teams in early 2005. During 2005, regional teams will roll this project out to 30 countries.

4. Other activities

34. Training workshops on Millennium Development Goals indicators have been organized in Africa (September 2003 and December 2004), Western Asia (February 2004) and Asia by the United Nations Statistics Division, the regional commissions and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, with additional support from UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Statistics Division. Additional workshops are planned in Africa, Western Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean in 2005. Participants are provided with training concerning definitions; methods of computation; potential problems with sources; the use of alternative sources and related implications; and methods for the interpretation, analysis and dissemination of Millennium Development Goals indicators. The Expert Group and the Statistics Division also coordinated the preparation of a common strategy on the needs for statistical capacity-building and specific recommendatic .s for scaling up statistical services for the report of the United Nations Millennium Project. The strategy recommends that statistics planning and organization should be concerned with the key statistical processes and systems needed, rather than with the production of ad hoc statistics on the Millennium Development Goals, which may be unreliable, duplicative and burdensome to national Governments. An effective statistical system which can meet the key data needs for results-based management and the measurement needs for the Goals must include:

(a) Effective and well-run national statistical services, based on an appropriate legal and institutional framework and equipped with sufficient financial and human resources, and an information and communication technology (ICD) infrastructure;

(b) Regular programmes of data collection and analysis, including a regular population and housing census; an integrated programme of household surveys for collecting current socio-economic and gender-disaggregated data; a programme for compiling economic statistics; and coherent systems for collecting statistics in specific social and environment sectors, in particular systems for collecting information on health, education, food and nutrition, and the environment.

Notes

[1] See, for example, the case studies and international study of the PARIS 21 task team on improved statistical support for monitoring development goals, available from www.paris21.org.

[2] The action plan was provided to the Statistical Commission at its 2004 session as a background document and is available at http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/sc2004.htm.

[3] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2004, Supplement No. 4* (E/2004/24), chap. V.D.

Annex

Improving the quality of data for the Millennium Development Goals indicators

Development of standards and guidelines

1. Poverty and hunger

1. The main problems identified in this area relate to the lack of internationally agreed guidelines for survey and measurement standards consistent with national accounting and suitable for developing countries; and difficulties in reconciling income and consumption data from household surveys and national accounting. Also, a long-term effort is needed to produce the necessary data and framework for the gender analysis of income and consumption and of intra-household distribution, including the development of methodologies to make better use of existing data sources, such as household and time use surveys.

2. The subgroup on poverty and hunger was formed to address these concerns. The following international and national statistical agencies have been part of the group: the World Bank; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; International Labour Organization (ILO); Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; United Nations Statistics Division; Development Policy and Planning Office; Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat; UNDP and the national statistical offices of Mexico, Cambodia and Peru. The World Bank and FAO co-chair the working group.

3. The first meeting of the subgroup on poverty and hunger was held in New York on 1 April 2004. At that meeting, it was agreed that the subgroup would undertake the following tasks:

1. Prepare a better integrated storyline for goal 1 of the Millennium Development Goals for inclusion in the 2005 report. Gender issues and links with other Millennium Development Goals indicators would be considered.
2. Examine the links between the current outputs of the relevant Millennium Project task forces and the poverty-hunger storylines of the Millennium Development Goals progress report.
3. Discuss with the *2005 World Development Report* team the links between their ongoing analysis on equity and the Millennium Development Goals storylines on poverty-hunger.
4. Review additional indicators for complementing the 2004 storylines and for refinement of the Millennium Development Goals list of indicators after 2005.
5. Review the relevant data sources and assess the data gaps, with special emphasis on examining the relationship between poverty and gender.
6. Establish appropriate and efficient data-sharing procedures between member organizations of the subgroup.

7. Coordinate capacity-building activities on poverty and hunger statistics with the member organizations of the subgroup.

4. At the second meeting, held in Geneva on 28 September 2004, the following areas of work were identified as priorities:

1. Analyse data from income and expenditure surveys with a view to showing the links between different dimensions of extreme poverty, in particular income/consumption poverty and food deprivation;

2. Review different sets of poverty estimates to explain differences and help ensure transparency and clarity in presenting both the results and the methodology.

3. Propose ways to analyse the gender dimension of poverty.

4. Propose guidelines on surveys and measurement standards to improve the production of country data on poverty and hunger.

Work is ongoing and outputs will be reviewed at the next meeting of the subgroup.

2. School enrolment data

5. Within the subgroup on gender indicators, UNICEF prepared an analysis of gender differentials in education based on data from household sample surveys (Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys and Demographic and Heath surveys) and administrative records data provided by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics. The group agreed that further research is needed and that UNICEF and UNESCO should continue to work together exploring and defining ways to optimize the use of different data sources for the monitoring of school enrolment and gender differences in access to education.

3. Literacy data

6. Literacy data do not generally distinguish between levels or skills of literacy and its functionality in daily life. UNESCO Institute for Statistics has launched a new literacy assessment monitoring programme, which aims to measure literacy across a spectrum of activities, from basic reading and writing to the higher-level skills needed to participate fully in a knowledge economy. The results of this programme will serve as a valuable indication of the state of literacy for individual countries, as well as an international benchmark against which progress will be monitored.

4. Gender

7. There are two main orders of problems with respect to gender. The first one concerns the indicators currently used to track progress towards goal 3 concerning gender equality and empowerment of women. The second one relates to the need to address a gender dimension in all other seven Millennium Development Goals. The subgroup on gender indicators over the last year has worked to address these issues and to provide recommendations to the Inter-Agency Expert Group and suggest guidelines to countries on how to best use available data to assess trends at the global, regional and national levels.

8. The subgroup is formed by the following agencies and offices: ILO, Inter-Parliamentary Union, World Bank, FAO, World Health Organization (WHO), UNESCO, UNICEF, United Nations Development Fund for Women, UNDP, Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, United Nations Statistics Division, Economic Commission for Europe, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Millennium Project task force 3 and national statistical offices of Cambodia, South Africa and Mexico.

5. Child mortality

9. Extensive development and review of concepts and methods is ongoing, and innovative indicators to complement the Millennium Development Goals indicators could be developed for wide use within a few years, including coverage of desirable interventions.

6. Maternal health

10. Estimating maternal mortality rations remains a challenge for many developing countries, where death registration is not adequately developed. Efforts by international agencies have concentrated on reliable trend measurement, to be able to inform the Millennium Development Goals monitoring exercise in spite of the limitations in the available data. Results of a new trend analysis undertaken by the responsible agencies assisted by external consultants are now available. This analysis is based on the available "non-modelled" data, which are estimates based on existing country data, and indicates some decline in maternal mortality, especially in countries with middle level of maternal mortality. In countries with a high level of maternal mortality, an assessment is still not possible because of the inadequacy of data.

11. Work on process indicators and related data collection has also continued. These indicators have been extensively researched and work is ongoing to better understand their correlation with maternal mortality levels.

7. HIV/AIDS

12. Ways of expanding coverage of the data have been carried out, especially based on household surveys that include blood testing. Extensive further development and review of concepts and methods are still needed for the HIV/AIDS behavioural indicators. Similarly, the indicator on school attendance of orphans versus non-orphans has not proved to be effective in assessing the effectiveness of programmes to address AIDS orphans needs. Responsible agencies are working to identify an alternative.

8. Malaria

13. Guidelines on the development of indicators on malaria to be obtained through household surveys were developed within the Roll Back Malaria partnership. The manual, produced by WHO and UNICEF, covers a series of core indicators for population coverage that can be collected through household surveys that permit national-level monitoring of the technical strategies recommended by the Partnership.

9. Environment indicators

14. The development and review of concepts and methods is ongoing for most of the environment indicators in the Millennium Development Goals list. However, work is still needed to develop a more coherent and integrated framework for analysis and to produce specific recommendations that national agencies can use for the development of environment statistics and indicators.

15. On this first point, the subgroup on environment indicators agreed to prepare integrated storylines that provide a complete picture on sustainable environment needed for the achievement of the other Millennium Development Goals. The analysis prepared for the 2005 report covers five components of environment (biodiversity, atmosphere, water, aquatic productivity, and land productivity) and is based on the existing official Millennium Development Goals indicators for this target.

16. On the second point, the subgroup is developing a background paper to present recommendations for an integrated systematic framework for the compilation of environmental information to support the development of the Millennium Development Goals environment indicators, bearing in mind the requirements of developing countries for environmental information and their capacity for producing such information.

17. Work is also progressing on the refinement of concepts and methodologies and on improving the availability of data for global monitoring on specific environment indicators. For instance, for the indicator on solid fuels, for which data were initially scarce, there are currently 30 more countries included in the data series, bringing the total to 94.

10. Water and sanitation

18. Extensive development and review of concepts and methods was undertaken by the responsible agencies. New estimates were produced for both indicators, access to water and access to sanitation, which were presented in the 2004 report.

11. Slums

19. Extensive preliminary research and development of this indicator have recently begun to yield good results. Considerable further development and review of concepts, methods and collection programmes are still needed. Successful ways of expanding coverage of the data are at a very early stage, and measures of trends also need a considerable development effort and agreement.

12. Youth unemployment

20. The ILO has progressed in the development of an indicator to track progress on this target. The indicator "Labour productivity and decent employment by age and sex" measures decent and productive work by age and sex and helps highlight the relationship between employment and other goals.

13. Information and communications technologies

21. A partnership on measuring ICT for development involving several agencies (International Telecommunication Union, UNCTAD, OECD, UNESCO, World

Bank, Information and Communication Technology Task Force, regional commissions and national statistical offices) was launched in June 2004. The partnership hopes to achieve a common set of core ICT indicators, harmonized and agreed upon internationally, to build statistical capacity for information society indicators in national statistical offices of developing countries and to develop a global database on ICT indicators and make it available on the Internet. Regional workshops to discuss the results of metadata collection are scheduled to take place during the fourth quarter of 2004, the results of which will be consolidated at the global meeting to be held in February 2005.